

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

MAY 2012

FOUR DOLLARS



Fishing Through Rivers of History • Room Enough for All • A Voice for the Rivers



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Recently I read an article in a well-respected publication suggesting that we have entered into a new era where man is controlling everything by virtue of his impacts upon the environment. The concept put forth was that “mother nature is dead” and that man’s direct effect on a substantial portion of the earth’s vegetation has reached a tipping point; one where, supposedly, it is man who will decide what is left of nature. The article made a compelling case of how man, as a species—the Johnny-Come-Lately to this planet—has had and continues to have a dominant impact upon our world.

There is no question that we have changed or otherwise affected many of the ecosystems around the globe. Given our knowledge about current issues associated with the world’s oceans and marine resources, we also know that our impacts are not limited to land masses. We have altered our earthly habitat, and we are now experiencing a broad range of challenges, including a war on invasive species, water shortages, the loss of flora and fauna, and related resource issues. The list continues.

I am certainly not a futurist or a doomsday predictor, but I do believe that we have the power within our individual actions to change the outcome of this planetary roulette game. By changing our habits and expectations, we—as individuals and as a race—can change the outcome. We must not only live this credo but convince others that our future depends upon our ability to turn to more sustainable enterprises.

This theme of sustainability courses throughout the stories inside, perhaps none more so than “A Voice for the Rivers”—the feature about the Mattaponi & Pamunkey Rivers Association—and “Room Enough for All,” about the importance of preserving Virginia’s farmland. Like other stewardship-based messages, I am reminded of the importance of each individual’s actions, and example to others, in effecting change. Time and again, it is the rumbling of action at the ground—or grassroots—level first, picking up volume as it rises upward, that forces us to re-think the way we are conducting ourselves.

Adopting sustainable living practices is both necessary and exciting, and has the power to unleash our creative human spirit. The alternative—living in a world without nature—is untenable to me, as I suspect it is to you.

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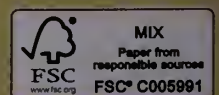
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17th March 1863.
Kelly's Ford Va

Plan Shewing Battle Ground And Cavalry Fight

Artillery +++++ Union Cavalry ■... Rebel Cavalry ■... Houses □



Fishing

THROUGH RIVERS OF HISTORY

C.F. PHELPS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA OFFERS FISHING, HUNTING, AND HISTORY

by Charlie Petrocci

It was a chilly morning, with fog lifting slowly off the rock-strewn river. Long-nose gar ambushed baitfish up against the bank, fat shad broke the water's surface, and bullhead catfish groveled along the bottom for unknown edibles. As dawn crawled up the treeline, large shadows formed along the river's edge. Silently these shapes entered the fast-moving, cold water. Suddenly the stillness was shattered and the water began to boil, not from feeding fish, but from horses, bullets, and falling men. Deer ran through the woods and the gar, catfish, and shad swam for their lives.

This was the opening scene at Kelly's Ford on the Rappahannock River during the morning of March 17, 1863. It was the third year of the Civil War, and the Rappahannock had become the line in the sand for the Confederacy during those bloody days of battle. Because of this, the river was frequently contested and fords, crossings, and bridges became military hot spots. Today many of those historic hot spots along Virginia's rivers are great fishing hot spots as well.

Numerous rivers in Virginia played an important role during the Civil War—the James, Appomattox, and Chickahominy, to name a few. Anglers fishing these historic areas today often unknowingly cast alongside the ghosts of the past. One of the recreation areas steeped in history is the C.F. Phelps Wildlife Management Area (WMA), located astride the Rappahannock River in both Culpeper and Fauquier counties.

Anglers enjoy a leisurely fishing float down the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford.



©Dwight Dyke

C.F. PHELPS WMA

The Battle of Kelly's Ford took place on the western side of the Rappahannock River, in and around the C.F. Phelps Wildlife Management Area. As a matter of fact, the bridge and adjacent WMA boat slide area are situated in the thick of the historic site. Just 200 yards downstream from the boat slide parking lot is the actual crossing site of the Union cavalry on that historic day. Behind the sign marking the site are the remnants of the Confederate rifle pits which overlooked the river.

C.F. Phelps WMA is a beautiful, well-managed area offering the public wildlife-related outdoor recreation opportunities, with numerous places to park and access administrative roads. The primary activities here include hunting, fishing, canoeing, hiking, and bird watching. Of the 4,539 acres on the property, over 1,000 of these are open meadows and fields. There is also a 3-acre pond hosting bass, catfish, and sunfish. And the sound of gunshots still echo at C.F. Phelps, though now they come from modern weapons wielded by hunters seeking rabbit, deer, and squirrel, or from sportsmen utilizing the modern sighting-in range located on the property.

One of the nice attributes about Virginia's wildlife management areas is that many of them are open for camping. And this includes C.F. Phelps. This is primitive camping, so don't expect to find toilets, showers, or pre-cut firewood for sale. Camping in these



Kelly's Ford, Harper's Weekly, 1863

THE BATTLE OF KELLY'S FORD

The Battle of Kelly's Ford was not a large Civil War engagement compared to others fought in Virginia, but it was significant. A classic cavalry battle, it took place in the fields along the Rappahannock River, which formed the dividing line between Union and Confederate armies during the 1863 and 1864 campaigns. And the battle set the stage for the forthcoming larger actions fought at Brandy Station and Remington Station, also located around the Rappahannock. Kelly's Ford was important because it was the first time in the war that Union cavalry held the line and beat back Confederate troopers on their own ground.

The riverside battle unfolded because Confederate General Fitzhugh Lee (a nephew of Robert E. Lee) had been raiding across the Rappahannock, targeting Union Army of the Potomac supply lines. Frustrated, Union commander General Joe Hooker dispatched Brig. General William Averell and 3,000 cavalry to seek and destroy Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry. Ironically, Lee and Averell were good friends at West Point before the war. And on his last raid Lee left a note for his friend, stating, "I wish you would put up your sword and leave my state. If you won't go home, return my visit and bring me a sack of coffee."

On the morning of St. Patrick's Day, 1863, Gen. Averell splashed across the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford with 2,100 Union cavalry troops and a battery of cannon to pay a visit to his old friend (900 soldiers were sent upriver). The troopers had to force the crossing at Kelly's Ford because 60 Confederate sharpshooters held the opposite side. Soon Fitzhugh Lee showed up with about 800 cavalry to oppose him and the battle see-sawed back and forth in the fields and woods along Route 674 for hours. (Union cavalry Capt. Marcus Reno participated; in 1876, he fought at the Battle of the Little Big Horn and survived.) Both sides charged the other with gallantry and by 5:30 that afternoon Averell finally pulled his exhausted men back across the river, leaving the dead behind. He had proven that Union troopers could fight spur to spur with veteran Confederate cavalry. And though the Confederates held the field that day, they did lose their famous artillery chief Major John Pelham, who had joined in one of the charges. (He was ironically killed by an artillery shell.) And Averell did not forget his old friend when he left this note behind: "Dear Fitz, Here's your coffee. Here's your visit. How did you like it?"



©Charlie Petrocci

Primitive camping is allowed at C.F. Phelps WMA.

RESOURCES

- ◆ Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries, C. F. Phelps WMA:
www.dgif.virginia.gov/wmas
Includes detailed information on dates open, map, directions.
- ◆ Friends of C. F. Phelps WMA
5669 Sumerduck Road
Remington, VA 22734
Friendsofcfphelpswma@gmail.com
- ◆ *Culpeper: A Virginia County's History Through 1920*, by Eugene Scheel.
- ◆ National Park Service, Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania Military Park Brochure
- ◆ A Driving Tour of Civil War Culpeper, Culpeper Department of Tourism

©Charlie Petrocci



Wade-fishing is popular in the upper Rappahannock River, but safe access will require a bit of hiking.

natural areas is not for the feint of heart. But if you want to have a genuine outdoor experience and wake up in your element, then it's a challenging alternative to standard camping sites in parks and private campgrounds.

Though C.F. Phelps WMA is popular for hunting, there is also access to fishing the Rappahannock from the property. One of those areas is in and around Kelly's Ford, which offers a boat slide for canoe, kayak, or small tin boat. You can also wade-fish here, but the steep banks can be tough to navigate. There are a couple of easier access points from the main section of the WMA along the eastern side of the river, including a trail that runs adjacent to the gas line. Accessing most of these fishing sites will involve a little hiking.

©Charlie Petrocci



The Rappahannock is known for fine smallmouth bass fishing, but occasionally largemouths are also taken. These fell for large surface poppers cast with a flyrod.

FISHING THE RAPP

The Rappahannock is an ancient river traversing hillsides, farmland, meadows, and historic sites. Its framework is made up of stones and bones. In other words, it has plenty of rocks—which makes for great fish habitat—and lots of brush and deadfall wood, which also creates cover, but a potential obstacle course for anglers working its waters.

The birthplace of the Rappahannock River is Chester Gap in the Blue Ridge

Mountains. It flows for approximately 184 miles down to its terminus at the Chesapeake Bay. The upper end of the river, all 60 some odd miles of it to Fredericksburg, are designated State Scenic River, and deservedly so. Anglers fishing the upper end of the river have a shot at an assortment of gamefish, including redbreast sunfish, shad, channel catfish, and its famed hard pulling smallmouth

bass. Besides wade-fishing, one of the best ways to fish the river is either by canoe or kayak. The 25-mile run from Kelly's Ford down to Mott's Landing is the most popular and scenic, but involves a two-day trip. You can also access the Rappahannock River by dropping in a boat on the Rapidan River, which is a major tributary, at the bridge along Route 522. Possibly the most sane way to fish

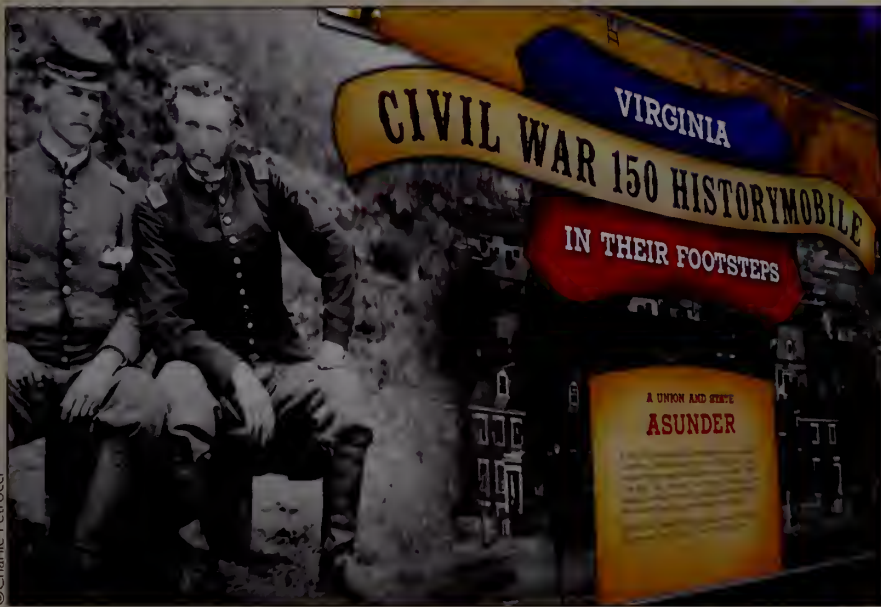
BE A CULTURE VULTURE

There are people out there who you could call culture vultures—those whose passion is history and heritage. Mix this with a dose of hunting, fishing, and camping and you have the makings of an addiction. I guess I am one of those addicted culture vultures because I often find myself seeking a human cultural connection to the landscape or waterscape I am fishing or hunting in. Those connections could be native Americans, colonial settlements, or historic battle sites. For me this cultural passion adds depth and a sense of place to the outdoor experience. And I also believe it's good for the soul.

There are many great fishing areas in Virginia where anglers can not only immerse themselves in great fishing, but also in state history. And there is no better time than now,

since Virginia is in the throes of acknowledging the 125th anniversary of the Civil War. To celebrate this benchmark in Virginia, a state-of-the-art "history mobile," (a walk-through truck trailer exhibit) is traveling around the state for the next several years, making stops at state parks, historic sites, and museums.

Some of those public areas that offer fishing and other recreation opportunities among Civil War historic sites include the Rapidan River, Appomattox River, North Anna River, James River, and the Staunton River, to name just a handful. And of course downstream from Kelly's Ford on the Rappahannock is famous Fredericksburg, the scene of a huge, bloody winter battle whence the river once again formed the dividing line between the lines.



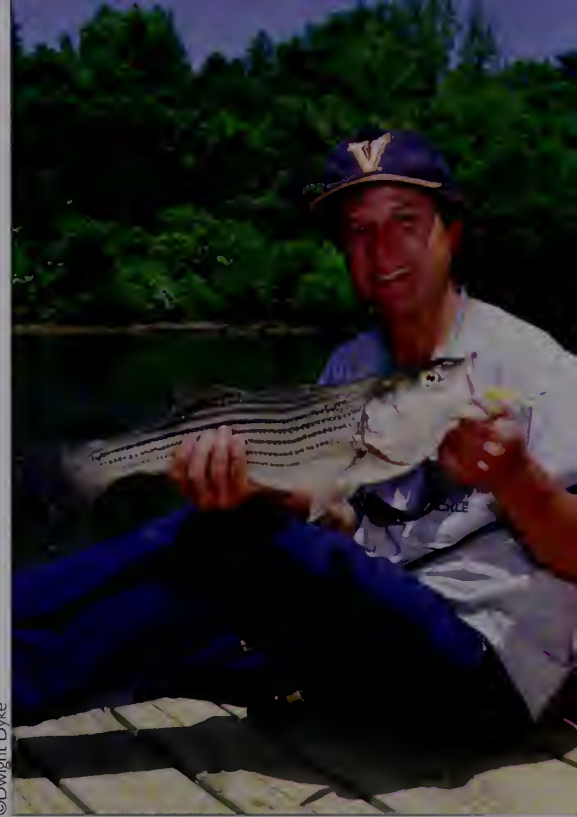
A traveling exhibit is currently making its way around the state in recognition of the 125th anniversary of the Civil War.

the Rappahannock is to contact area canoe livery that can help get you on and off the water. Local tackle shops in Fredericksburg will have information.

Though smallmouth bass are the most popular target species on the Rappahannock today, they weren't there when Union cavalry crossed the river that morning in 1863. As a matter of fact, it wasn't until the beginning of

the turn of the century that smallmouths made an appearance in the river through stocking efforts.

"Native fish from the Civil War era on the Rappahannock included shad, herring, fallfish, longnose gar, northern hogsuckers, chubs, bullhead catfish, and striped bass, explained DGIF fisheries biologist John Odenkirk. Not a glorious line-up except for



©Dwight Dyke

Biologists studying the Rappahannock's fisheries since the removal of the Embrey Dam are seeing a shift in populations, including more striped bass in the upper river.

the stripers. "Since the Embrey Dam came down, we are once again seeing striped bass, herring, and shad in the upper end of the Rappahannock and hopefully their numbers will increase as time goes on," added Odenkirk.

The Rappahannock is a pretty river, but may not win any beauty pageants with its frequent muddy water, eroded banks, and craggy islands. What it lacks in looks it certainly makes up for in angling opportunities, local history, and outdoor recreation along its course. For those of us who love the marriage of history and outdoor recreation, the land and waters around the C.F. Phelps Wildlife Management Area beckon you. And if you are fortunate to fish the river on a cool, fog-strewn spring morning, listen for the splash of horses, the rattle of sabers, and the bugle call of command from Virginia's past. It may take your fishing trip into another dimension. ☞

Charlie Petrocci is a maritime heritage researcher, writer, lecturer, and consultant who specializes in coastal traditions such as fisheries, seafood, and community folklore. He has lived on the Eastern Shore for the past 25 years.



Bass Fishing's Next Generation

*Youth clubs instill
a love of fishing...
and learning.*

by David Hart

Zach Francis admits he was pretty nervous when he walked across the weigh-in stage at the National Guard Junior World Championship in Arkansas last year. Who could blame him? Just 13 at the time, the Abingdon eighth-grader was standing in front of hundreds of spectators when fishing icon, television host, and tournament emcee Hank Parker stuck a microphone in his face and asked him about his day on the water. Zach handled himself well, offering a run-down of his techniques along with his overall thoughts of the two-day event.

His journey to that stage started in Virginia. As a member of Southwest Virginia Junior Anglers, Zach fished his way through a series of youth tournaments over the course of several months to win the 11 to 14 age group in the Virginia Bass Federation's junior championship. His win earned him a trip to Arkansas and the right to compete against boys and girls from all over the United States. Nicholas Bodsford, of Richmond, also won the 15 to 18 age group and advanced to the national championship last year, as well.

Zach's club is one of seven in the state that are under the umbrella of the 700-member Virginia Bass Federation (VBF). All of the youth clubs are sponsored by an adult VBF club, which mentors the boys and girls who participate. In some cases, the adults serve as boat captains who shuttle the young anglers across the water during various fishing events. Sometimes, the adult clubs simply act as mentors, offering advice on how to be better anglers for all species of fish.

Just For Kids

The VBF's youth program isn't just designed to groom the next generation of bass tournament anglers. Tournaments are part of each club's regular activities, but the youth program is much more than that, says Zach's dad, Andy Francis, who also serves as the club's adult advisor. Along with scheduled tournaments in which the kids fish against each other or against other clubs around the state, the young anglers get together for regular meetings to discuss their favorite subject. They also participate in conservation projects and sometimes they just go fishing.

"We've planted brush piles in local lakes and we are working on organizing a litter pick-up at one of the ramps on South Holston Reservoir," says Andy. "The club is focused on fishing, but it's certainly much more than that. When we moved to Abingdon from South Boston, Zach made some new friends pretty quick when he joined this club."

The junior angler program does require a sponsorship by an adult VBF club member, something that can be difficult to find these days.

"A lot of the Virginia Bass Federation adult members just don't have the necessary time that sponsoring a youth club demands," says The Bass Federation (TBF) National Youth Director Mark Gintert. "It's certainly not unique to Virginia, either. We have hundreds of youth clubs throughout the country, but we could certainly have a lot more if the adult clubs could find the time to mentor a youth club. It's difficult in today's world."

Coming To A School Near You?

That's one reason the TBF started the Student Angler Federation last year. Unlike the junior angler program, SAF clubs do not require an adult club sponsor. Instead, they are school-based clubs that are no different than any other school-sanctioned organization that meets on a regular basis on school grounds. They only need the blessing of administrators along with an in-school sponsor, usually a teacher or administrator who understands the thrill fishing brings to kids. The SAF provides

©David Hart



Left, Abingdon eighth-grader Zack Francis earned a trip to the National Guard Junior World Championship last year. He competed against young anglers across the country and met his hero, Frank Parker. Kids in youth fishing clubs learn teamwork and respect while becoming better anglers.

neration

guidelines for organizing a club along with support in the form of educational materials and fundraising assistance, says Gintert.

"We also provide insurance and assistance in planning club events," he adds. "Mostly, though, the kids themselves run the clubs. They make all the decisions and determine the activities with the help of their adult advisor."

So far, two SAF clubs have formed in Virginia (one is Orange County High School), but Gintert, who oversees the national SAF program, says he's received numerous requests for information and expects the program to grow substantially throughout the state. It certainly has in other states. Last year alone, 300 school clubs formed, including at least 35 in Arkansas and nearly as many in Kentucky, and Gintert expects that many or more will come on board in the coming years.

"I'm hoping we will see school-to-school rivalries just like we see with high school football or softball programs," adds Gintert. "That

©David Hart





Nicholas Bodsford of Richmond with Frank Parker at the National Guard Jr. World Championship.

©David Hart



Emma Wright of the Kenston Forest Student Angler Federation Club is all smiles after a good fishing day.

©David Hart

happened with two SAF clubs in Florida last year and all the kids, along with school officials, absolutely loved it."

That hasn't happened in Virginia yet, but if Command Sergeant Major Michael "Doc" McGhee has any say, it will. McGhee, who works at Fort Pickett, serves as the advisor to Virginia's other SAF club at Kenston Forest School in Blackstone. He hopes students in other schools throughout Virginia will form clubs so he and his Kenston Forest students can fish against them in a tournament format.

The Great Equalizer

Those tournaments aren't the focus of the Student Angler Federation, although they are an important part to many student participants. McGhee says students only need one common interest: fishing. But just as schools hold students to minimum grade-point averages, good attendance, and other requirements for other sports, McGhee says Kenston Forest students must meet similar requirements just to be in the club.

"They serve as a great incentive for doing well in class," he notes. "That's one of the best things about this program. A student doesn't have to be a great athlete or a math whiz to enjoy fishing. Everyone can do it, as long as they meet the grade and attendance requirements."

Gintert says a survey of SAF club members in Illinois found that 60 percent of the students did not participate in any other sports.

"That tells me that a lot of kids need another outlet that gets them off the couch and outside. That's the ultimate goal of this organization. Fishing is a great equalizer," says Gintert. "You don't have to be six-two and 200 pounds to go fishing. In fact, we have a lot of girls who participate."

McGhee's club is tremendously popular, with about 10 percent of the 350-student body participating, including many athletes and girls. He admits he was somewhat surprised by that, but in hindsight, why should he be?

"A lot of our kids come from rural settings, so fishing is part of their lives, whether they play football or not. I really shouldn't be surprised that the club is so popular among kids from all walks of life," he says.

Only a handful of the club's members participate in tournaments, but everyone who joins does so because they love to fish. Or they want to learn, which is exactly what McGhee and Gintert want to see. As participation rates drop among all anglers, our natural resources are losing the strongest advocates they have. As a group, anglers stand up for the things they love.

Future Advocates

The Kenston Forest club fishes nearly every Monday after school on an eight-acre pond located on the school's campus, but they also hold indoor meetings to discuss fishing, fish biology, and natural resource conservation issues. That's exactly why these and other fishing-specific clubs are so important. Angler

numbers are gradually declining in Virginia and throughout the country. And with that decline comes the loss of advocates for fish habitat and other aquatic resources.

"The more kids we can get interested in fishing, the more voices we will have in the future for conservation, even if they don't fish later in life," says McGhee.

But don't tell that to Zach Francis, at least not yet. He probably doesn't know how important he is to the future of fishing. Most kids his age just want to have fun, and a day on the water offers a respite from the daily grind of school, chores, and other mundane activities. But some day, he and the other members of Southwest Virginia Junior Anglers, along with young men and women who belong to the Student Angler Federation, will be leaders in conservation efforts all over the state.

Right now, however, Zach is thinking about the road to the next Junior World Championship. He loves all kinds of fishing, but he also enjoys the camaraderie that surrounds tournament fishing and the competition that goes along with it. Not only did he get to spend two days on DeGray Lake in Arkansas, he got to mingle with some of the country's top professional anglers who were on hand to assist in the tournament. He also earned a \$500 scholarship for placing fifth overall in the 11 to 14 age group.

Zach doesn't fish for money, though. There is no money awarded in youth tournaments in Virginia. He does it because he has a competitive streak in him and, he admits, he likes to win. Most of all, though, belonging to a fishing club gives Zach more opportunities to do the things he loves: fishing and hanging out with other boys and girls who share his passion. 🎣

David Hart is a full-time freelance writer and photographer from Rice. He is a regular contributor to numerous national hunting and fishing magazines.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- ◆ Virginia Bass Federation, Junior Angler Program
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www.virginiatbfyouth.com
- ◆ Student Angler Federation,
www.highschoolfishing.org
Or call The Bass Federation
headquarters, (580) 765-9031



story & photos by Gail Brown

PACK TO SURVIVE

Jim Kelly likes to hike. Elliot Knob, Yosemite Valley's Panorama Trail, the Wicklow Way in Ireland; like pebbles in a boot, each demands his attention. A hiker in a family of hikers, it's what's beyond the tree line, what's at the top, what's down the next trail that shadows his periphery, that plucks at his senses. When family and friends get together it always comes around to the mountains, who's been where, what happened. But tellers beware: Old stories never die. They hang around to haunt you, fair or not. Friends say Jim Kelly has the look, as well as the luck, of the Irish, with that red hair, that smile, that Irish wit. It's a lucky man, all agree, who can go off into the mountains and return without a scratch.

"Luck," Kelly maintains, "has nothing to do with it. Just follow well-marked trails and plan and pack for emergencies." Still, mistakes are

made. A lifetime of hiking is a long time to go unscathed, the law of averages being what it is. But be it math or magic, it all caught up with Kelly one sparkling fall afternoon when he and son Jake were hiking Maine's Penobscot Mountain. And hindsight being what it is, it took no time at all to reconstruct the trail of events that caught up with him that day. By then, of course, it was too late.

Kelly is right about planning and supplies. "Planning and preparation make the difference when out hiking for days or even a few hours," says William (Billy) Chrimes, search and rescue training specialist for the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. "Of the 100–110 or so Search and Rescue (SAR) operations performed at the state level, about ten percent involve hikers. Of that ten percent, most are day-hikers that made a spontaneous decision to

'just go for a hike' and probably did not plan. They may not have known the area. People can wander off a marked trail onto a trail that looks equally worn, thinking it's a shortcut when it's just an unmarked path. They get lost."

Karen Beck-Herzog, experienced hiker and Shenandoah National Park public affairs officer, agrees: "Day-hikers may not have all the information needed about the trails... You need a map and should also consult a trail guide... Trail guides offer descriptions and helpful information you won't find on a map." In 2011, 68 percent of the SAR incidents in the park involved day-hikers.

Beck-Herzog also believes good planning includes what you leave behind. "Most importantly, leave an itinerary and stick to it. Then, if something happens, people will know where to look. Do not continue to move. Searchers will start at the Point Last Seen (PLS). By not moving, you can keep the search area minimal."

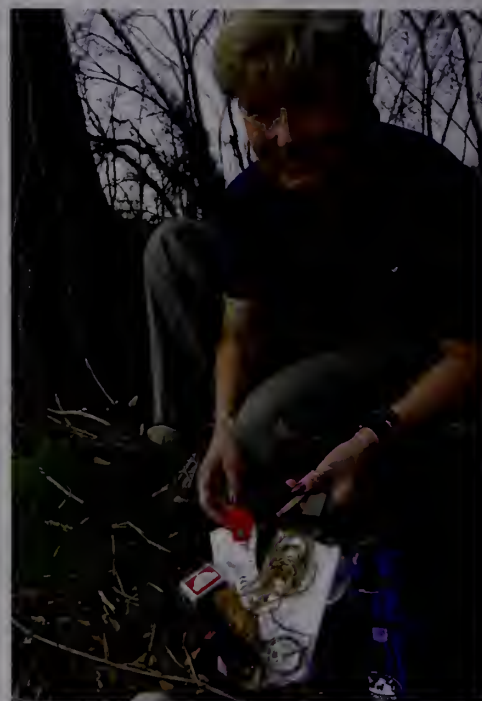
But Kelly's mistake wasn't one of inexperience or lack of preparation. His wife, Maureen, knew what time he and Jake left and where they were hiking. Kelly did his homework, as usual, which included consulting guide books and printing off maps from sites such as www.hikingupward.com. Kelly had hiked this trail in the past and knew the entire trip was 5.6 miles. It was not a difficult hike, more like a long walk, but on this day it was spontaneous. He and Jake expected it to take approximately four hours. Off they went.

Karen Holson, the Department's outdoor education supervisor, has a simple list to keep hikers safe even if out for just a few hours.

Holson's list includes: one large, clear trash bag, a piece of aluminum foil, a fire-starting tool, a whistle, water, and high energy bars. "My main requirement before it goes in my pack," states Holson, "is that it be lightweight and multifunctional. If the trash bag is clear, it can be placed over a green plant during daylight hours. When condensation occurs, water can be collected. A trash bag can serve as a ground cover, a sleeping bag, or a raincoat. To start a fire I carry a magnesium fire starter and a piece of metal. Fire offers warmth and can serve as a signal. The piece of foil can be a cup or a reflector (signal). People might think they don't need a whistle, but you'll be able to blow the whistle longer and louder than you can shout." Holson always has first-aid supplies on hand.

Kelly has all that and more. "My pack typically weighs about 15-20 lbs., but I don't mind the extra weight. I have extra clothing and a small first-aid kit attached to my camera, as well as a full one in my pack. My father started me hiking when I was a very young child. He taught me to be prepared. This was the first, and last, time I took a chance."

If what you carry with you is important, what you wear is equally important, according to Holson. "Your feet are your transportation. Some people think they can double up on socks to stay warm. What happens is their feet become cramped, their circulation is cut off, and then their feet become cold. Insulated boots are a must for colder weather. Holson also recommends three layers of quality clothing: a base layer (wicking in the summer, thermal in cooler weather); a middle layer of wool



Karen Holson likes to keep it simple. Things that make it into her pack are lightweight and multifunctional.

or wool blends in cooler weather; and an outer layer of waterproof material such as Gore-Tex or a windbreaker."

Roy Hutchinson, co-founder of Wilderness Discovery and volunteer instructor for the Department, believes people might be tempted to cut corners, thinking the cost of supplies might be prohibitive. "Sometimes people say they can't afford what it takes to outfit a pack. You have to ask yourself: 'What's your life worth? Is it worth \$40?' You can get all you need to stay safe at a discount store for about \$40. And your pack won't weigh more than 5 lbs."



SAR teams look for possible decision points such as creek or trail crossings. Pictured here, K9 Alert member David Fleenor and Ryka.



Park ranger Caroline Garmon (Pocahontas State Park) advises visitors to "take a minute to obtain information about your hike."



For a day hike, everything you need can fit into a pack weighing about 5 lbs. New signs at Pocahontas SP (right) detail trail use and difficulty. Black diamond indicates most difficult level; blue square is moderate.

If not the weather, access to supplies, or knowledge of what to bring caused Kelly's problem, then what? "I think experienced hikers can become over-confident. That was my mistake; I was over-confident. I had never had a problem, so I took a chance. It seemed like such a short hike, I just left my pack in the cabin. All I took was two bottles of water."

While Kelly was over-confident, his situation was compounded by signage open to misinterpretation. "The signpost at the summit of Penobscot Mountain said: Jordan Pond Cliffs Trail – 1.5 miles. The sign pointed to a trail. The trail looked equally gradual and was also marked. The trail we just came off was 2.8 miles." Both he and his son saw an opportunity to shorten their return hike by over 1 mile. "But Jordan Pond Cliffs Trail didn't start at the summit of Penobscot as we thought. And it wasn't 1.5 miles long. It started 1.5 miles further on."

"In Search and Rescue situations we call that a 'decision point,'" explains David Fleenor, president of K-9 Alert Search and Rescue, Inc. "A decision was made that took the person into an unexpected situation. Depending on the 'lost person behavior' profile, we will use these decision points as targets for 'hasty' or area searches."

"When I had the accident we had done about 1 mile of the actual cliff trail," says Kelly, "and we had about another 2.5 miles to go to get down to the road that we hoped to reach faster. It was a much more difficult trail. At times we were hugging the cliff. Then we came to a slab of

stone which blocked the trail; it must have been 8 feet straight up. Jake went over the top. I put my left foot in a crack to boost myself up, but slipped. I kept sliding...farther and farther down the embankment...until I slammed into a small cedar. It held. That saved me, but I was really banged up. I got a deep gash in my knee. With Jake's help I got myself over the rock. We had over 2 miles of rugged terrain to go and I was bleeding a lot. I had no way to help myself."

As Kelly rested on a rock, dismay deepening, three hikers they'd just passed came rushing back toward them; like Jake, they'd heard the series of expletives he'd let loose when he started to slide. As luck would have it, these weren't ordinary hikers. These hikers were nurses! All three! Nurses with bright blue vet wrap! Nurses with skills! Nurses who would bandage him up so he could make it back down the mountain.

It was a long, painful, two miles back to the restaurant and a longer night still at the hospital. "The wound was deep and jagged and required at least a dozen stitches," says wife Maureen. "That's the one hike he'd like to forget. But things could have been so much worse."

Forget? Not likely. When family and friends gather—stories, camaraderie, a Guinness or two—Kelly never brings it up. His friends do. It seems there's consensus: "Ah, that Jim Kelly," they say, "Sure, it's a lucky man, that Jim Kelly is." ❧

Gail Brown is a retired teacher and school administrator.



by Randall Shank

*The
Mattaponi
and
Pamunkey
Rivers
Association
is still going strong
after 20 years
of service.*

I wait in a duck blind on a cold, misty January dawn on the Pamunkey River marsh known as “the pocket.” The wind rushes by like the giant swish of a broom moving across the brown grasses as a flock of mallards fly upriver. The chirp of a chickadee catches my attention when it hops from one branch to another looking for shadbush catkins. A turkey yelps from its roost on the hill across the creek. In the woods behind me, an owl calls into the morning as if to announce that the night is over.

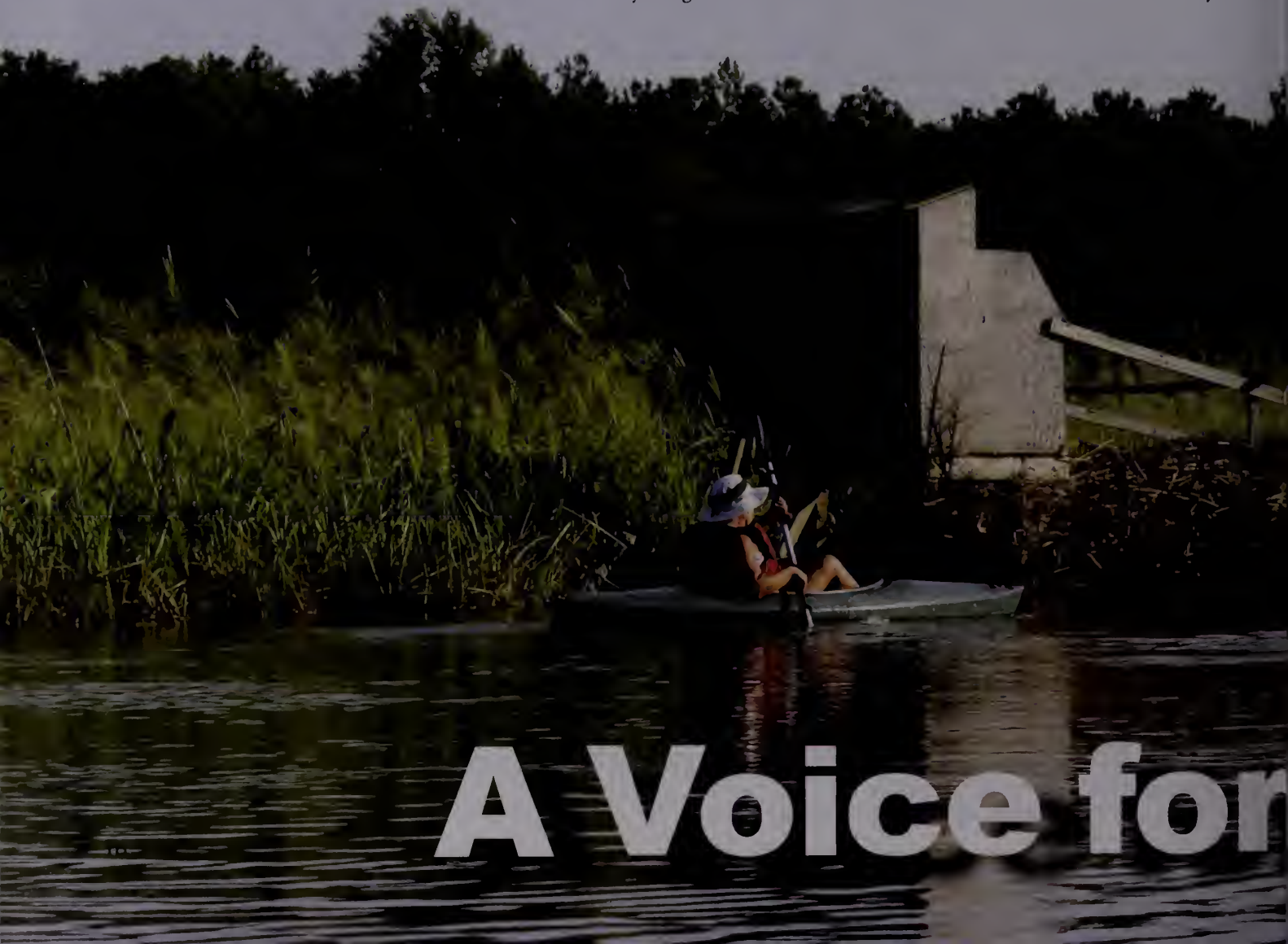
The morning symphony continues with three bald eagles entering the chorus, “Kee, kee, kee.” Hundreds of pintails glide in the air from one side of the marsh to the other, flushed from their roost by the eagles. The sun peers over the horizon and more than a thousand Canada geese erupt from the water and fly to the cornfields to feed. The noise of the geese is so deafening that nothing else can be heard. When they are gone, a lone beaver

comes down the creek, sees me, and slaps its tail against the water—putting an end to the morning concert with a loud exclamation point.

With spring, the rivers change. Winter waterfowl have returned north and new visitors arrive. Old-timers say that when the shadbush is in bloom and redbud is in full color, the Pamunkey and her sister river, the Mattaponi, fill with migrating striped bass, shad, and herring.

The Pamunkey and Mattaponi Indians have always known this and they support the shad fishery with hatcheries on both reservations. Likewise, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife hatcheries have over the years stocked millions of American shad fry to the Pamunkey River.

In summer, water lovers from urban Richmond come to paddle, fish, water-ski, swim, or just hang out. The water in the Mattaponi River is so clean that more than one locality has



A Voice for

had their eye on it for a drinking water source. DGIF recognized the importance of the river when they recently purchased over 2,500 acres on the upper Mattaponi in Caroline County for the newly created Mattaponi Wildlife Management Area. Here, the river is so protected with forested lands that when it rains, vegetation catches the runoff and the river remains mostly clear.

The Mattaponi and Pamunkey, in fact, are two of the cleanest tidal rivers on the East Coast. A local river conservation organization would like to keep it that way.

A Little History

In 1991, a small group of people gathered at the invitation of Jerry Walker and the late Billy Mills in the village of Walkerton on the Mattaponi. Development pressures were mounting in the watershed, and the group knew the rivers needed a voice. They formed the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers Association (MPRA).



Grain farms along the rivers are important habitat for migrating Canada geese and offer many hunting opportunities. Duck blinds and stands of wild rice are common sights on a river paddle. photo ©Randall Shank



the Rivers

This June, MPRA celebrates its twenty-first anniversary as a river protection group that has become a leading, local advocate for its namesake rivers. MPRA is an all-volunteer organization that focuses on education, recreation, habitat protection, and advocacy to raise the public's awareness of the importance and value of the rivers. At its annual meeting in January, over 70 people gathered to socialize, share dinner, and support river projects. The rivers remain the common bond between teachers, students, retirees, farmers, hunters, fishermen, kayakers, riparian landowners, and others who were there.

When we walked through the door, I had just come from a Mattaponi goose hunt. People were sharing pictures of recently caught bass, catfish, and rockfish. Stories about duck hunting and the last river sojourn were circulated. One of the kids came up to me and gushed, "Guess what I got for Christmas! A kayak!" There was a shared passion, a sense of place, a feeling of belonging in that room. A good friend who recently moved closer to town and away from her riverfront home told me that night, "I really miss the Canada geese. I can't hear the geese."

And that is what MPRA is all about. It's about loving something bigger than yourself and doing something for it because you care about it. If you love something, you are going to protect it.



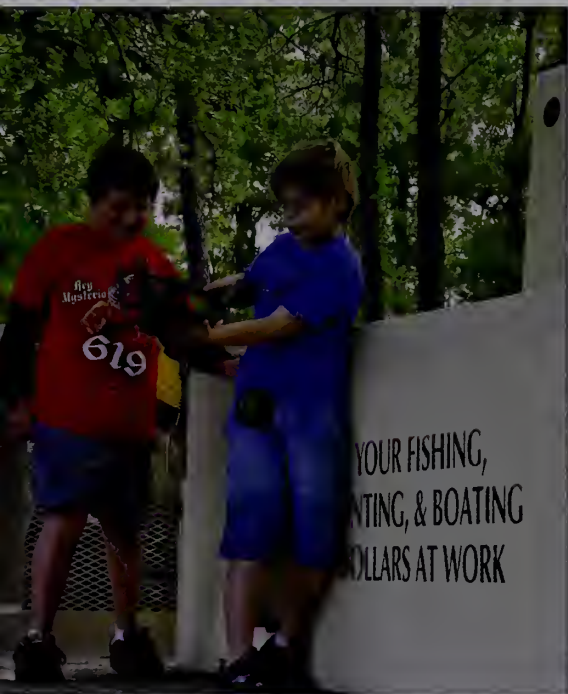
River Camp is an opportunity for kids of all ages to get in the outdoor classroom on the river.

Knee-deep Education

MPRA believes that catching a fish, gazing at a huge bald eagle nest, or standing knee-deep in wetland mud connects the person with the resource. And so, each autumn MPRA brings environmental science and watershed education to area sixth graders during "River Day" at Sandy Point State Forest on the Mattaponi. In one of the classes, local historical interpreter Willie Balderson transforms into a member of Captain John Smith's crew

camped on the river shore. Describing the students' reactions to his role, Balderson says, "While in the natural world, students reach a state of suspended disbelief which takes them back in time to the way it once was." In many ways, the Mattaponi and the Pamunkey *are* the way they once were.

Because today's kids appear glued to computers and smart phones, a day away from the noises and distractions of the modern world becomes ever more important. At River Day, a middle school student spent part



DGIF stocking truck, King & Queen hatchery, makes an educational visit to River Day.



River Camp participants and volunteers.



An MPRA-led river sojourn is a great way to learn more about the rivers and meet people who care about them.

Photo courtesy of Chns Henickeck

of the time in the shallow waters catching hogchokers and minnows in a seine net. He exclaimed, "This is the best field trip ever! We actually spent the day in the field!"

Another student carried a squirrel skull that he found underneath a bald eagle nest. He was going to take it home to show his family. A young girl yelled, "I caught a fish!" It was her first one ever.

Setting a Stewardship Example

Volunteers support wildlife conservation by helping with the annual Audubon bird count at several river locations. Boy Scouts and school groups build and install wood duck and prothonotary warbler nesting boxes on lands held by cooperating riparian landowners.

"We have put up more than one hundred bird nesting boxes in wetland areas on the two rivers since the program started," volunteer Brad Davis reported.

With a twenty-year history of community mobilization for "River Stewardship Day," the group's signature event, hundreds of MPRA volunteers gather annually to walk the shorelines or travel by boat to pick up trash. Kitty Cox, coordinator for the event, estimates that more than 2,000 volunteers have participated over the years.

"This project has been so effective, it's now difficult to find trash or dump sites on the rivers. Crews really have to work at it." On average each year, more than 30 local businesses help sponsor and support the clean-up.

Defending a river means taking a stand when resources are being threatened. MPRA volunteers have appeared at numerous public hearings when adverse impacts on either river appear imminent. The group is currently exploring ways to gain a nomination for scenic rivers designation on the Mattaponi between Walkerton and the Mattaponi Indian Reservation.

◆ ◆ ◆

Virginia's population will grow. Fish and game habitat will shrink. Other challenges will come along.

Who speaks for the rivers when man debates their value? For the past 20 years, MPRA has been a strong voice in the York River watershed. Today's young people will be the voice of tomorrow for the rivers. The Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers Association is working to make that happen. ❧

Randall Shank is a freelance writer who lives on the Mattaponi River in King & Queen County.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- ◆ Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers Association www.mptra.org
- ◆ Scenic Rivers Program, Va. Dept. of Conservation & Recreation www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/srmain.shtml

Room Enough for



How Farmland Preservation Can Help Wildlife Thrive

by William H. Funk

Virginia's pastoral landscape and farming heritage has been celebrated for over four hundred years, but the eventual triumph of agriculture in the New World was not always a sure thing.

The corporate-financed entrepreneurs, roustabouts, and gentlemen of leisure who in May of 1606 waded ashore on what would become Jamestown were hardly versed in the intricacies of coaxing a living from the soil,

All



Courtesy of The Library of Virginia

had thoroughly settled much of the surrounding region's higher ground with small farm plots.

As bearers of exotic metal tools, glassware, and fabrics, the Europeans were welcomed by the Powhatan with prolific feasts and entertainments; their wily leader, Wahunsenacawh, had plans to utilize the foreigners' superior technologies in his ongoing power struggles against neighboring Algonquin tribes. Baskets of precious maize, freely given to the colonists, were heaped up in makeshift granaries; fresh meat and fish were abundantly shared; and overcrowded England seemed comfortably far away.

All looked promising to the settlers as the planting season gave way to late summer, but the thought apparently never occurred to these foolhardy urbanites that the free food they enjoyed—the result of others' hard work in field and forest—was not a permanent tribute but rather a calculated, short-term diplomatic offering. When stores began to run low, the English simply took what they desired from surrounding Powhatan villages and farms, leading in due time to violent resistance and a brief war that was to end only with the capture in 1613 of Powhatan's daughter, the celebrated peacemaker Pocahontas.

The days turned colder and the bleak reality of their situation became apparent to even the most fervent among them. Malnutrition weakened immune systems unaccustomed to American pathogens, and the primitive settlement's burying grounds began to fill. The settlers had been unwilling to learn local methods of growing food in the meager soil they'd claimed for themselves and now it was too late. They expired one by one, in the worst of circumstances, until in the spring of 1610 reinforcements from England found only 50 of the 600 colonists still living, the survivors later recalling that dreadful winter as "the starving time."



and particularly not the pestilential swamplands of the lower James River. The island chosen as a defensible settlement had marshy soils and brackish water and, tellingly, was uninhabited by the local Powhatan peoples, who



Farms play an important role in Virginia's economy while offering essential habitat to upland birds and movement corridors to game animals.

Sally Mills

A complete lack of preparation for the foreseeable challenges that would face them coupled with a short-sighted belligerence that tragically alienated their only source of sustenance conspired to nearly wipe out the colony before it could become established, but it was the absence of a working knowledge of agriculture, the only means by which the newcomers could have achieved a sustainable independence, that most nearly doomed the expedition. Not until reinforcements arrived from England that summer did Jamestown again become viable, and with the introduction of new strains of exportable tobacco that took readily to the colony's reinstituted farmland, the European presence in North America became assured.

Today its remaining farms and forestlands still play an essential role in how Virginia sees itself. Agriculture provides a substantial percentage of the commonwealth's economic output: In a study by the University of Virginia, farming and forestry-related industries contributed almost \$79 billion to the state's economy in 2006 and provided 501,500 jobs, or 10.3 percent, of total state employment. According to the state Department of Environmental Quality, farms cover 24 percent of Virginia's total land area, while an impressive 65 percent of the state remains forested with roughly 85 percent of Virginia's forestland under private ownership. It is therefore the farmer and the private forest owner that together control the future of both

"Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which he keeps alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth."

—Thomas Jefferson,
Notes on the State of Virginia (1781)

Virginia's wildlife habitat and its storied agricultural industry.

Many rural landowners are seeking an affordable way to retain their open spaces. Residential and commercial development are gobbling up farms and eradicating isolated pockets of woodland while larger forest tracts are being broken up by roads and more suburban growth. The agricultural and timber industries stand to permanently lose thousands of productive acres to land conversion, while the ecological integrity of our remaining farms and forests is of crucial concern to the health of the state's wildlife.

Fortunately for all of us—wildlife included—Virginians looking to protect their farmland, forests, and other open spaces have a proven method which rewards landowners who choose to keep their property intact and undeveloped. Generous tax incentives are available to those wishing to permanently protect their land from inappropriate development with a conservation easement.

By voluntarily donating easements, landowners permanently relinquish the right to intensively develop their property in order to protect conservation values such as agriculture, forestry, and wildlife habitat. "We're pleased to work with localities interested in preserving their working farm and forestland," says Kevin Schmidt, Office of Farmland Preservation coordinator at the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. "In addition to the economic benefits associated with agricultural and forestal use, these farms and forests provide important wildlife habitat, open space, and other conservation values to communities across Virginia."

In recognition of this, Governor Bob McDonnell has renewed his pledge to conserve farmland across the state. In early 2012, he announced another \$1.2 million in grant funds available for purchasing development rights, in order to protect farm acreage.



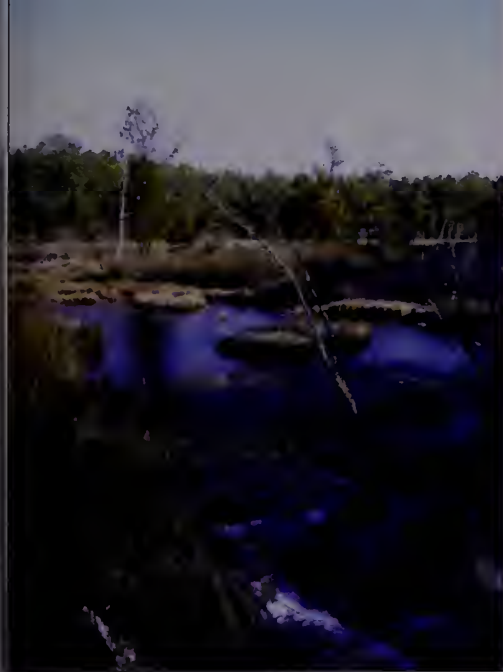
©William Funk

Tim Brown surveys his farm in Accomack Co.

Two Virginia Landowners Balancing Farming and Wildlife

Tim Brown farms corn and soybeans on 637 acres in Accomack County. Several years ago, Brown, an avid wildlife observer and duck hunter, took advantage of a cost-share program from Ducks Unlimited (DU) to install dams and dikes on the property in order to seasonally flood 30 acres of marginal farmland to attract waterfowl. Today the farm plays host to numerous species of duck, wading birds like egrets and ibises, migratory shorebirds, and raptors.

The Eastern Shore is known for its marshy landscapes, and while the soil is often fertile, some areas drain poorly—which can result in lost crops after heavy rains. This, however, was an ideal situation for a farmer-conservationist like Brown, who simply tar-



Brown seasonally floods about 30 acres of low lying land, creating waterfowl habitat.



©William Funk

A controlled burn on the Shobe farm in Rockbridge County will rejuvenate forestland and create good habitat for a host of wildlife species.

geted those areas of standing water and perennial flooding for wetlands restoration. “I get a great deal of personal pleasure from the habitat management steps we’ve taken here,” says Brown, “and I’ll go out and watch the ducks come in at dusk two or three times a week. The wetlands are almost a sanctuary to me.”

By leveraging funds from both public and private sources via DU’s cost-share and the USDA’s Conservation Reserve Program, Brown has partially recouped the financial loss of 30 acres of (albeit marginal) cropland. A further cost-saver was his decision to place the property under a conservation easement held jointly by DU and the Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust, which provided state and federal income tax benefits.

Tim Brown’s contribution to the coast’s wildlife doesn’t stop with his waterfowl impoundments. Warm-season native grasses planted along the borders of his fields filter water headed for the adjacent Chesapeake Bay of fertilizers that cause harmful algal blooms, and his ongoing wetlands restoration benefits everything from blue crabs to bald eagles. Careful planning and the advice of experts has allowed Brown to integrate profitable farming with his love of wildlife—income for the soul.

At the opposite end of the state, Eric Shobe and his family own a cattle-and-timber farm near Goshen in western Rockbridge County composed of 500 acres of upland pasture and 1,000 acres of mixed hardwood forest. Waterways flowing into the Little

Calfpasture River are home to rare native brook trout. Deer, wild turkey, and bear are plentiful, and ruffed grouse—a scarce species in many parts of its native range—are being encouraged with clearings planted with apple and pear trees.

The property was largely a climax forest when he acquired it, Shobe says, and was heavily overpopulated with deer, whose foraging appetites were observable in a stark “browse line” of about five feet from the ground, beneath which no undergrowth of leafy branch went uneaten. Active management began by thinning the deer with aggressive hunting, which gave the forest floor a chance to recover some greenery.

More intensive steps were needed, so Shobe called in the Virginia Forestry & Wildlife Group, a land management service based in Afton that provides a palette of options for landowners seeking to enhance their properties’ habitat quality. The company’s Brian Morse, a wildlife biologist, assessed Shobe’s farm and instigated a number of landscape improvements, including controlled burns, small clearcuts, and food plots. Even American chestnut trees, wiped out decades ago by an alien blight, are being reintroduced as saplings to their former habitat after years of careful selective breeding.

“Too often it seems like it’s one or the other,” Shobe says about farming and habitat retention. “We’ve struck a nice balance here raising cattle and wildlife, and I think what

we’ve done has benefited both.” Happily for Eric Shobe and his neighbors, these benefits will continue in perpetuity; the Shobe farm is protected by a conservation easement held by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

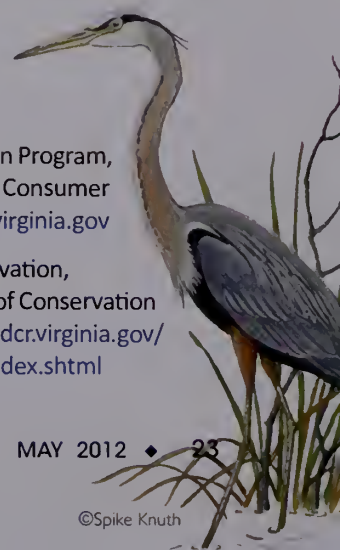
Today, a rapidly changing commonwealth faces an escalating destruction of its agricultural heritage, but innovative farmers and foresters are incorporating habitat protection and enhancement into their land use plans to retain an important component of their properties. Whether you hunt and fish yourself, you’re interested in leasing these rights out to others, or you simply find solace in the rejuvenating effects of observing wildlife for its own sake, making positive contributions to the wildlife habitat on your farm will have real and lasting benefits to you and your legacy. 🌿


William H. Funk (williamfunk3@verizon.net) is a writer and filmmaker based in Staunton.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Farmland Preservation Program, Virginia Agriculture & Consumer Services www.vdacs.virginia.gov

Office of Land Conservation, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation www.dcr.virginia.gov/land_conservation/index.shtml





Where There's a Will, There's a Way

*Craig County's
Inspirational
Young Outdoorsman*

by Bruce Ingram

Those of us who enjoy the outdoors have long known how therapeutic spending time afield can be. For 12-year-old Jake Bostic of Craig County, his time outdoors has not only been mentally restorative but also physically life sustaining.

A backstory is now required. When Jake was six, he was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease (an inflammatory bowel disease) that has made him ill and even hospitalized him at times. His mother, Sue, has a simple answer concerning what her son's motivation is to overcome this affliction.

"The outdoors," she said. "The doctors have used Jake many times as an example of 'if there is a will there is a way.' In order to keep going, Jake puts in a nasogastric tube at night to feed himself 1,250 calories. His disease keeps him from maintaining weight easily.

"Jake goes to the hospital to help other kids who have the same disease and gives them encouragement. Jake will do anything to keep hunting and fishing. There have been times we were at a crossroads with Jake and all the doctor had to say was, 'If you do this you will be ready for hunting or fishing' whatever season was in at the time he was sick. Teachers, doctors, and our family give complete credit for Jake's current remission to God and the outdoors."

Jake's physician is Dr. Michael H. Hart, professor of pediatrics at Carillion in Roanoke.

"Jake is truly an exceptional young man," Hart said. "When I first saw him as a patient he was unable to walk from the severity of his joint involvement with his inflammatory bowel disease, one of the complications of IBD. Jake has tolerated very potent medications, while never complaining. He has learned to place a nightly nasogastric feeding tube to maintain excellent overall nutrition, which has helped us withdraw virtually all of his medicines while maintaining an excellent quality of life."

"With their willingness to talk with other youngsters with similar diseases, Jake's family has been a support to my patients. Jake has thrived due to his willingness to commit to his therapy and whatever it takes to get better... He is an exceptional student and his future is very bright. I hope he'll choose to go into a medical field, as I know he'd be a great doctor someday."

Dr. Hart's comments about Jake's school accomplishments were echoed by Scott Critzer, director of testing for Craig County Public Schools. Critzer said that the young man was the county's first elementary student to make *perfect* scores on all of his Standards of Learning (SOL) tests.

"This young man has a fantastic work ethic," Critzer said. "His ability to overcome his disorder makes him, I believe, a role model for the other students."

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Once I learned about Jake's history, I arranged to meet and go squirrel hunting with this young outdoorsman who makes straight *A's* in school and shows market lambs at competitions across the state as his summer 4-H livestock project; a young man who killed his first squirrel at age 6, who harvested an 8-point buck at age 8, and who tagged a 10-pointer at age 10. Given his taking of an 8-pointer and 10-pointer on even number years, the youngster had hoped to take a 12-pointer this past season. It was not to be, however, although Jake did manage to harvest six whitetails.

First, I asked him what he would like to say to other young people who suffer from Crohn's Disease or other disabilities.

"The message I would like to give them is to have something as their motivation so they can fight what is bothering them," he told me. "I like to share with other kids how much I love to go fishing and hunting. That I live to be outdoors, and I will do anything the doctors



Photo courtesy of the Bostic family

Jake Bostic with a fine Craig County 8-pointer that he harvested at age 8. Left, Jenna, Sue, and Jake hunt squirrels.

tell me so that I can go outside. The outdoors is the best thing there is.

"But the other kids don't have to love the outdoors like I do to get better. They just have to have something as a goal, I tell them. I tell them they can beat their disease like I'm beating mine."

Jake then told of how Dr. Hart asked him to go visit a hospitalized Martinsville boy who likewise suffered from an IBD and who was feeling squeamish about inserting his feeding tube. Jake did so, put his own feeding tube in as the boy watched, and then proceeded to tell him about some of his recent outdoor adventures.

Another assignment from Dr. Hart was to have Jake and his family dine at a restaurant with a Roanoke girl who likewise needed a feeding tube. He encouraged her to insert the tube herself, because her mother had been doing it for her, and explained how the young lady could develop self-reliance and become more independent by doing so.

Of course, Jake has had plenty of opportunities for self-motivation.

"When I was 9, I was sick during late summer," he recalled. "Once, I had to leave the feeding tube in for three weeks, I just couldn't gain any weight. But I just had to get healthy because deer season was about to

begin. But I kept trying to do what the doctor told me to do, and I got well enough to kill a deer.

"Another time, I felt like I was going downhill and losing weight and just couldn't seem to get better. But it was spring gobbler season, and I had to kill a turkey. I finally killed a big gobbler but had to go into the hospital the next day. I didn't want to stay in the hospital because I was afraid I would miss the SOL tests.

"So I worked hard in the hospital to do what the doctors said, I got better, and the school said I could take my SOL tests late. I made a perfect 600 score on all of them."

On the squirrel hunting expedition, Jake, his mom, and I hunted on one section of the property, while his dad and sister Jenna pursued squirrels on the other side. The day was windy and cold and Jake wasn't able to shoot any silvertails. I invited him to come back on another day, and he told me that he would do better the next time because he now knew "the lay of the land."

I expect Jake to conquer those bushytails the next time he visits, just like I expect him to overcome any adversity he meets in life—thanks to his passion for the outdoors. ✦

Bruce Ingram writes a weekly outdoors blog and also has four river smallmouth books for sale at www.bruceingramoutdoors.com.

AFIELD AND AFLOAT



Outdoor Classics

by
Beth Herter

Virginia Fishing Guide

by Bob Gooch. Updated by M.W. Smith
2011 University of Virginia Press
Soft cover. \$19.95
Black and white photos. Maps.
www.upress.virginia.edu
(434) 982-2932

"A book that should be on the car seat of every Virginia angler."

— Richmond Times-Dispatch

This handy guide was originally published in 1988. But how times have changed in terms of the various resources available to anglers in our commonwealth. With the advent of the Internet, and with changes in certain regulations, the editors at University of Virginia Press saw that a new, updated version of this straightforward, no-frills outdoor classic was in order.

Author Bob Gooch died in 2006, so it was up to M.W. Smith, professor of English and proprietor of Greasy Creek Outfitters to rise to the occasion. This fresh edition contains a quick reference preface so that anglers can review at a glance the major changes and additions that impact both saltwater and freshwater fishing. Changes include 'catch and release only' designations, stocking schedules for trout streams, and changes to laws and regulations. The book has also been given a facelift with the addition of new photographs and maps.

Especially helpful are up-to-the-minute appendices that present Virginia anglers with a wealth of angling-related resources such as: government agencies, publications and map sources, fee-based private trout waters, fishing guides, charter boat rentals, and fishing piers. This is a must-have volume for Virginia anglers, who, in light of the current economic climate, may be casting their hooks a bit closer to home.



Northern Pinesnake Watch

You can help conserve and protect the Northern pinesnake! The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries would like your assistance in reporting current, past, live or dead pinesnake observations. If you have seen a pinesnake or know of a past observation in the state, please fill out the form below and send it to the address provided. Your personal information will remain confidential. Thank you for helping us protect a natural rarity! Please include the following information in your observation:

Date observed: _____

Observation location (be as specific as possible): _____

County or City/Town: _____

Snake activity: ☐ moving ☐ resting ☐ dead ☐ other (explain) _____

Additional comments: _____

The below information will be used for confirmation purposes **only**.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Daytime phone number: _____

Additional information, such as photographs and/or location maps, is welcome and should be included when possible. Send the completed form to Mike Pinder, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, 2206 South Main Street, Suite C, Blacksburg, VA 24060.

You can also respond via our Web link, at: www.dgif.virginia.gov/pinesnake

Virginia Herpetological Society Events

May 18–20: *Annual Spring Survey & Meeting*, Shenandoah River State Park

June 23–24: *Annual "HerpBlitz" Survey*, Mattaponi Wildlife Management Area

August 18: *1-Day Survey Event*, Caledon Natural Area State Park

More information at:

www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/2012-events/2012-vhs-events/index.htm

IMAGE OF THE MONTH



Congratulations go to Diane and Johnny Hottle of Criders for their lovely portrait of a piebald white-tailed deer. The Hottles said that they first saw the deer as a fawn visiting the apple tree outside their sunroom. Appearing out of nowhere the fawn became known as "Casper," and visited regularly. The Hottles used a Minolta SRT 100 35mm SLR camera, 135mm lens, and Fuji 400 ISO film....film? Great shot, you guys!!!

You are invited to submit one to five of your best photographs to "Image of the Month," Virginia Wildlife Magazine, P.O. Box 11104, 4010 West Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23230-1104. Send original slides, super high-quality prints, or high-res jpeg, tiff, or raw files on a disk and include a self-addressed, stamped envelope or other shipping method for return. Also, please include any pertinent information regarding how and where you captured the image and what camera and settings you used, along with your phone number. We look forward to seeing and sharing your work with our readers.

Photo courtesy of © 2012 Douglas Ogle

Coming This July!

Change is a part of life, and that's certainly true of the publishing world these days. So you will probably not be surprised to learn that this magazine will undergo some changes soon.

Beginning this July, *Virginia Wildlife* will become a bi-monthly magazine. We will add more pages, more content, and more special features—as we move to six issues a year: July-August, September-October, November-December, January-February, March-April, and May-June. This change means that, even in the face of increased production costs, *Virginia Wildlife* will maintain its low subscription rate and remain free of advertising while giving you more of the stories and photography that you have asked for. Our goal is to make every issue bigger and better than ever!

We will kick off the new format with a special feature about the history of the Pittman-Robertson Act, the legislative lynchpin in the foundation of all wildlife and sportfishing restoration programs across this country. The following issue will include a special hunting guide, running at the start of the fall seasons. Also coming to you next year will be a trout guide, a fishing forecast, and a special outdoors guide showcasing wildlife-related recreation opportunities and events. That guide will be combined with our annual photography contest, to be published in July-August 2013. (More details about the photo contest will be forthcoming; categories and deadline will change.)

The magazine staff is excited about the new format and the opportunity to better serve our loyal subscribers who have supported the magazine over the past 73 years. We ask for your patience as we move forward, and trust that the new and improved *Virginia Wildlife* will continue to find a spot by your favorite reading chair.



38th Annual Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally

Konnarock, VA ♦ May 11-12, 2012

www.mountrogersnaturalistrally.org

Whitetail

Spring = Time of Plenty

essay by
Matt Knox

In late winter as the days begin to lengthen and temperatures begin to warm, the whitetail's world dramatically changes. In most areas, over the period of about a month a deer's routine will evolve from a day-to-day fight for survival to one of choosing from a nearly endless buffet of succulent, nutritious food. The animal itself is literally transformed; its metabolism and activity levels increase significantly and its coat molts from the highly insulating thick brown-gray coat of winter back to the much cooler, thin red coat of summer.

In terms of selection, quality, and quantity, it will be the deer's best food season of the year. And with the spring green-up, a deer's primary objective becomes to consume as much high-quality forage as possible.

All deer have high nutritional needs as they grow during the spring—especially the young, and pregnant does. Fetuses that have been growing since fall begin putting significant demands on the mother and grow very rapidly in the last trimester; bucks need energy to grow antlers; all need energy to molt their coats.

Most of the food consumed will be new herbaceous vegetation and forbs—perfect because it is more succulent, more palatable, and more easily digested. On average, a deer needs greater than or equal to 16 percent protein in its spring diet. Luckily, much new spring vegetation exceeds 20 percent. Regrettably, preferred foods at this time of year often include crops in agricultural fields and vegetable gardens, and ornamental plantings.

Outside of the fall rut, a buck's life is pretty dull, and spring is no exception. Bucks, which re-formed all-male bachelor groups in mid- to late winter, remain in loose bachelor

groups with size and membership routinely changing. But something big is beginning to happen. Spring is the season when bucks will begin to grow antlers. By early March, all hard antlers from the previous fall should have been shed or dropped. By April, new antlers begin to grow from the pedicels on most males. Male fawns which survived the winter and are still members of their female-dominated family group will begin growing their first antlers at about 10 to 11 months of age. By 18 months, they will have their first set of hard antlers.

The antler germinates from a specialized tissue that is located on the top of the pedicel. When environmental conditions are right, the body sends signals to this tissue and the antler begins to grow. Injuries to the pedicel often result in multiple antlers, or antlers growing from strange locations and angles.

Antlers are true bone grown by male



Biology

and Birth of the Fawns

members and are a defining characteristic of the deer family, Cervidae. (Only female *reindeer* routinely grow antlers, and these antlers are generally pretty small.) Antlers are not horns. They differ from the horns of goats and sheep because they are made of true bone and because they are deciduous, or cast and completely re-grown every year. In some species, like bighorn sheep, a ram's age can be determined by the annual rings of horn growth. A buck's age cannot be determined by his antlers.

Antler growth is controlled by the photoperiod, or day length. By manipulating light, it is possible to make a deer grow several sets of antlers in a single year or one set of antlers over several years. With the predictable change of seasons, nature makes one set of antlers per year. At the height of the antler growth in late spring or early summer, a deer's antlers will be growing nearly one-half to more than one inch per day.

As spring draws to an end, one of the biggest events in the whitetail's annual life cycle occurs—birth of the next generation. During the final month of spring, the fawns will be born.

All of the effort that went into the rut back in the fall was designed to make sure that the majority of the does would be bred at about the same time (mid-November) so that the majority of fawns would hit the ground about 200 days later, at about the same time. In Virginia, this would be the first two weeks of June, when habitat conditions are most favorable for the fawns and their mothers. This synchronized drop of fawns acts as a type of prey saturation, hopefully overwhelming predators and increasing the fawn's chance of survival during the first critical weeks of life. Good fawning areas or habitat are characterized by good cover for hiding the young from predators.

Productivity in female deer is related to

age and nutrition. When doe fawns breed in healthy deer herds and give birth at one year of age, they almost always give birth to a single fawn. Most does typically give birth at two years of age and can have one or two fawns. As does reach age three and older, given adequate nutrition, twin fawns become the norm and triplet fawns are not uncommon.

A couple of days before giving birth, a doe will withdraw from her family group and select a fawning area that will be protected and defended from all other deer. Family group bonds will for several weeks to a month or more be completely erased. This area is where the fawn(s) will hide upon arrival. No other deer will be allowed to enter this area for several weeks. This isolation allows the doe to develop a strong bond with her young—a bond that is essential to the fawn surviving.

Matt Knox is a deer project coordinator for the Department, serving south-central Virginia.

©Bill Lea



Accommodating Wild

Can humans and wildlife co-exist on a military installation? Fort Belvoir, a U.S. Army Garrison located in the southeastern part of Fairfax County, strives to maintain and enhance wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and aesthetics while responding to the development needs that arise from mission requirements and base realignments. Environmental stewardship is a major focus of Fort Belvoir's command group and staff.

One of the ways that development on the base affects wildlife is by fragmenting habitat, which threatens the abundance and biological diversity of species. To mitigate the ecological impacts of habitat fragmentation, larger forested areas can be reconnected by constructing crossings that allow for the safe movement of wildlife between such areas.

In 1993, the garrison established the Fort Belvoir Forest and Wildlife Corridor, a continuous forest band between the Jackson Miles Abbott Wetland Refuge in the north-eastern corner and the Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge in the south-central portion of the installation. The purpose of the corridor is to

prevent genetic isolation of animal populations by fostering the movement of wildlife and providing continuous forest habitat for activities like foraging, bedding, and breeding. According to Michael Hudson and Gregory Fleming in Fort Belvoir's BRAC Operations Office, the Fort Belvoir Forest and Wildlife Corridor connects larger natural areas, such as Huntley Meadows Park to the north and Pohick Bay Regional Park, Mason Neck State Park, and Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge to the south, to create a 15-mile continuous corridor, which helps to improve genetic diversity off-site.

Current management plans contain recommendations regarding the maintenance and enhancement of existing wildlife crossings and identify locations for future wildlife crossing structures to direct animal movement close to home—across the installation's roads. According to Fleming, numerous factors are considered when designing crossings for optimal wildlife use, such as whether wildlife species will cross at the specified location, the crossing will fit into the surrounding landscape, and the dimensions of the crossing



Fort Belvoir Wildlife Road Crossings Map

This map depicts the expansion of wildlife refuges, as well as the wildlife crossings designed and/or established, on Fort Belvoir. (Map courtesy of the U.S. Army.)



will accommodate the targeted species. Some animals tend to follow water sources, while others stick to migratory routes.

The garrison has constructed three additional wildlife crossings for large mammals, small mammals, and amphibians to cross *beneath* roads on the installation. These structures are intended to connect forest habitat and help maintain abundant, healthy, and diverse wildlife populations that exist on and off the installation. They are also intended to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions, thereby lowering the risk of harm to people, animals, and property.

This article was contributed by Tara E. Wiedeman, Senior Associate and Project Manager at Travesky & Associates, Ltd.

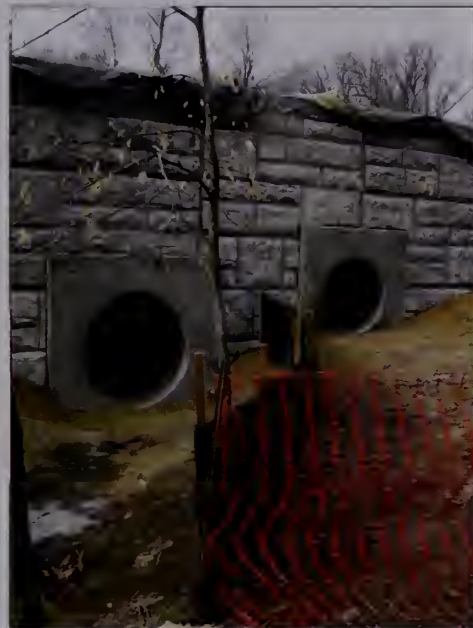
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Life at Fort Belvoir



Large Mammal Crossing

The box culvert on the left allows the safe passage of large mammals (e.g., coyotes and deer) under Pohick Road, between the Staff Sgt. John D. Linde Visitor Center and the Recycling Center. This crossing connects a training area to the Accotink Bay Wildlife Refuge and serves as a stormwater overflow device during high water events. The box culvert on the right was established to support the normal flow of the stream beneath the road. (Photo by Gregory W. Fleming, Environmental Specialist, Fort Belvoir BRAC Operations Office.)



Small Mammal Crossing

Since the pipe in the stream channel on the left contains water flow control devices, a secondary pipe was installed on the right to assist small mammals (e.g., groundhogs, foxes, opossums, raccoons, and skunks) to cross Gunston Road, between 1st Street and 3rd Street, and to accommodate stormwater overflow. This pipe connects a small, wooded patch and a training area. (Photo by Gregory W. Fleming, Environmental Specialist, Fort Belvoir BRAC Operations Office.)



©Bill Lea



PHOTO TIPS

by Lynda Richardson

Give Yourself a Photography Assignment: Practice!



While brushing up on my studio photography skills, I asked my Jack Russell terrier, Miss Bug, if she would pose as a butterfly for me. Thank goodness she's a patient and skilled (though underpaid) model. © 2012 Lynda Richardson

I can tell that I get really rusty if I'm not shooting images all the time. As with any skill, you need to practice to retain a certain level of expertise. To stay on top of their game, a musician, a ballerina, or a golf pro need weekly—if not daily—practice. And so does a serious photographer.

Some photographers just pick up their cameras to shoot special occasions, such as a vacation or a birthday party. I have to say that if I waited that long in between shooting, I would forget the features on my camera!

So I like to go out and practice. One day, I might work on reconnecting with my macro abilities, while other times I might refresh my long lens flash photography skills. I haven't done much studio work lately, so I've been practicing those skills using my little

Jack Russell terrier, Miss Bug, as a model. I have also been going over my image processing skills to stay current with the latest computer software improvements.

When I used to whitewater kayak, a "bombproof" roll was an extremely important skill to have. Being able to right your boat immediately after it flips over in a fast-swirling current is essential and sometimes a life or death skill. Every whitewater kayaker practices their roll because constant practice reinforces the body's "muscle memory" to go into action, particularly in stressful situations. Your life literally depends on your ability to successfully roll your boat!

Practicing photography is like rolling your boat. You give your hands and brain "muscle memory" to react accurately and

quickly in any circumstance. Something practiced becomes second nature. If the perfect scene plays out before you, do you want to be fumbling with your camera and miss the greatest photograph of your life? I think not! Practicing your photographic skills will do nothing but help you become a better shooter.

Self-assignments can be really fun and challenging. Here are some examples of self-assignments that you may find useful:

1. Pick your least favorite lens or focal length and use only that to shoot for the day;
 2. Pick a location and only photograph things that are a specific color, like purple or orange;
 3. Only photograph subjects that are backlit and use your pop-up flash to add light to them;
 4. Hunt for and photograph things in the shape of a heart;
 5. Only photograph monochromatic images or scenes;
 6. Select a 5' by 5' area and spend 30–60 minutes photographing things inside that space and that space alone.
- Does that give you some ideas?

The old adage "practice makes perfect" has real truth and purpose behind it. You might not need to roll a kayak, but you do need to be bombproof when those photographic opportunities present themselves! Good Luck and Happy Shooting!

Lynda Richardson's Photography Workshops

All classes are held at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. Go to www.lewisginter.org to register and look under Adult & Family Education or call (804) 262-9887 X322 (M–F, 9AM–5PM).



On the Water

by Tom Guess

All Too Often

I often reminisce about my childhood when May arrives and I walk outside with sleepy eyes into the early morning warmth of the sun heating my face. The smells of freshly cut grass mixed with a hint of onion and other spring aromas remind me that it's time to start shifting my thoughts to Mother's Day, summer vacations, the Memorial Day holiday, hitting the water to fish and boat, and National Safe Boating Week.

What? National Safe Boating Week?

The National Safe Boating Campaign and National Safe Boating Week are held each year during the week leading up to Memorial Day. This year's campaign runs May 19–25. The focus is always on reminding people that a life jacket will save your life and, more simply, to “Wear It!” not just during this week but throughout the entire boating season. Much like a seatbelt, it's too late to put on a life jacket after a boating accident. A life jacket is very difficult and sometimes nearly impossible to put on in the water because of its inherent buoyancy.

On average, 500 people drown annually nationwide while boating due to not wearing a life jacket. Here in Virginia, we experience an average of 20 fatalities annually, with over 85 percent of them being attributed to drowning due to capsizing or falls overboard while not wearing an approved life jacket. A person who finds himself in the water unexpectedly is 4.4 times more likely to drown without a life jacket, even if they are an exceptional swimmer.

It was just one of those warm, late spring days that I recall while serving in the U.S. Coast Guard as officer in charge of a station on the Middle Peninsula. This particularly beautiful day, we received a call for a possible drowning from a fall overboard. When we arrived on the scene, we were told by the family that a middle-aged gentleman had decided to do some fishing in a cove in front of his property while his entire family was gathered for a cookout. While he was maneuvering his boat

to the spot where he wanted to fish, he fell into the water without wearing his life jacket.

Unfortunately, he was unable to swim and, to add to the misfortune, none of his family members on shore—only a few hundred feet away—noticed him fall overboard. Once they realized he was not on his boat, it was too late. He disappeared below the surface and subsequently drowned in front of his family in about six feet of water. When we arrived on the scene, we discovered that his boat, a typical run-about, had all of the appropriate safety equipment onboard. But, as is the case *all too often*, his approved life jacket was on the deck next to his seat.

This is a sobering and all-too-familiar sight in boating accidents... and a stark reminder of how things could have turned out much differently.

Remember, while you're on the water this boating season: *Be Responsible* by not consuming alcoholic beverages while operating a boat; *Be Safe* and always wear an approved and properly fitting life jacket; and *Have Fun*, because this is what boating should be about!

Tom Guess, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret), serves as the state boating law administrator at the DGIF.

**National
Safe
Boating
Week**

**May
19–25**



©Dwight Dyke



Dining In

by Ken and Maria Perrotte

Fish Tajitas

This sandwich is a cross between a taco and a fajita. Guess that would make it a “tajita” and it’s a good recipe to try for your Cinco de Mayo table. We tried and tweaked a couple of existing fish taco recipes, but finally decided to create something both intuitive and spontaneous.

For this dish, you can use just about any kind of firm, flaky white fish—from catfish to crappie in the freshwater realm to rockfish, flounder, and mahi-mahi in salt water. The key is not using fillets that are too thin. You want some substance when you sink your teeth into the meal. Also, the two sauce options are better if made ahead of time. They can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for a day or two.

Get creative with toppings and garnishes. Ideally they should provide some texture, including a little crunch, and offsetting flavors to the heat from some of the spices and jalapeno. Everything from chopped cabbage, lettuce, tomatoes, or peeled and diced cucumbers could be used.



Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- ¾ cup chopped yellow or Vidalia onion
- 1 cup chopped sweet green, yellow and/or red peppers
- ½ fresh jalapeño pepper, diced or very thinly sliced (seeds and ribs removed)
- 2 teaspoons diced rehydrated dried Mexican peppers (we like Guajillo or anchos)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pound fish fillets
- Dash cayenne pepper
- Dash salt and black pepper

- 4 flour tortillas, 6- to 8-inch diameter works best
- 1 tablespoon chopped scallions (green onions)
- 1 ripe avocado, sliced
- 1 ripe mango, sliced with some slices cut small in a julienne style

Preparation

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a cast iron skillet over medium low heat. Sauté the onions and sweet peppers for a couple of minutes, adding a little salt and pepper, until they begin to get soft. Add the hot peppers and garlic and cook another couple of minutes. Remove from pan and set aside.

In the same skillet, add the rest of the olive oil. Sprinkle the fish with salt and pepper and cook over medium to medium-high heat until opaque. The fish also could be grilled or even fried, if you prefer.

Break the fish into ample chunks or strips and place the pieces in warmed tortillas. Spoon the vegetables over the fish and place a slice of avocado and a sprinkling of julienned mango and chopped scallions into the tortilla. Top with a dollop or two of favored sauce. Add bigger mango and avocado slices to the plate. Serve immediately. Red beans and rice make a nice side dish. Serves 2.

Sour Cream Taco Sauce

- 3 tablespoons sour cream
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon finely sliced scallions (green onion)
- 1 small clove garlic, finely minced
- ½ teaspoon lime zest
- 1½ teaspoon diced rehydrated dried Mexican peppers
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro
- ¼ teaspoon cumin
- ⅛ teaspoon coriander
- ⅛ teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1½ teaspoons lime juice

Yogurt and Dill Sauce

- 3 tablespoons plain yogurt
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon finely sliced scallions (green onion)
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro
- ½ fresh jalapeño pepper, finely diced (seeds and ribs removed)
- ¼ teaspoon dill
- ¼ teaspoon cumin
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons lime juice

Combine all sauce ingredients. To rehydrate dried peppers, place in a pan of water, bring to a boil, remove from heat, and let sit for at least an hour. Slice open and remove the stem, seeds, and membranes. Guajillos have a strong, papery skin. If the skin remains tough, scrape out the flesh and discard the skin. Chop and whisk together or puree everything in a food processor.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE OUTDOOR CATALOG

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